Lifting the cross-ownership ban to
allow further media consolidation will not serve the public interest. I urge you to not permit this monopolistic consolidation of Mass Media on the Radio waves. The FCC exists to protect the public interest, and removing the cross-ownership ban will be to the detriment of the American Public. The FCC would thus be harming the public to serve corporate interests.

Background info:
FCC chair Michael Powell has made no secret of his desire to abandon any substantive public interest restrictions on the dominance of big media corporations, claiming "the oppressor here is regulation." (See "Their Man in Washington," http://www.fair.org/extra/0110/powell.html .) He even presented this latest move as a patriotic act, declaring, "The flame of the American ideal may flicker, but it will never be extinguished...We will do our small part and press on with our business, solemnly, but resolutely."
WHAT A SHAMELESS CROCK!

Pressure to drop the cross-ownership ban comes from companies like Rupert Murdoch's News Corp., whose recent acquisition of station operator Chris-Craft puts it in violation, giving it two TV stations and a newspaper in New York City. (News Corp. already had a waiver to operate one TV station and a newspaper in New York.) There are more than 40 markets with newspaper-broadcast combinations already, most 'grandfathered' in when the law was written in 1975. Other companies in violation of the law include the Tribune Co. which owns TV-broadcast combinations in Los Angeles, New York, Orlando and Chicago.

Powell has called the cross-ownership ban "extremely prohibitive," and said he sees no reason a city's TV station and newspaper shouldn't be controlled by the same company. Indeed, media corporations routinely make deals that violate existing law, so confident are they of the current anti-regulatory climate-- "skating where the puck is going to be," is how one industry analyst described it (L.A. Times, 9/14/01).

Besides the wholly predictable result of a single company controlling a town's TV stations, radio stations, cable company and only newspaper, critics warn that elimination of this rule will essentially signal the absorption of the newspaper business into the television industry, with a negative impact on the quality of print journalism. Newspaper companies "see savings in news gathering by combining with TV stations as a big plus," an industry analyst told the L.A. Times (9/14/01), giving an indication that the newly merged megacompanies would provide communities with less news, not more.

FCC reviews include a mandatory public comment period to give Americans a chance to weigh in on proposed regulations. Examination of some previous public comment periods shows that the comments received are often few and are overwhelmingly drawn from media companies and industry trade organizations.

The deadline for comment on the cable ownership cap has been extended to January 4, 2002; FAIR will release more information on that soon. More urgent right now are comments about the newspaper-broadcast cross-ownership ban, which are due by December 3.

At a time of crisis, the dangers of such overwhelming concentration in media are more glaring than ever. The changes underway will make U.S. media even less diverse, more commercial and less accountable to the public.

Once again:
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allow further media consolidation will not serve the public interest.